

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 07092 012307Z

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2887

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USLO PEKING

USMISSION BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 07092 012307Z

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 7092

FROM AMBASSADOR KINTNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, PARM, IN, US, XO

SUBJ: U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE INDIAN OCEAN

REF: A. NEW DELHI 5616

B. BANGKOK 5249

C. BANGKOK 5132

D. BANGKOK 5989

SUMMARY: THAILAND IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. ACTIONS AND POLICY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND THIS MESSAGE IS AN ENDORSEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S RECOMMENDATION FOR AN AUTHORITATIVE AND POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC USE ON THIS SUBJECT. THOUGHTS ARE ALSO OFFERED ON POLITICAL INITIATIVES PROMOTING OUR INTERESTS IN THIS AREA.
END SUMMARY

1. IN THAILAND THE INTERESTS AND ACTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ARE BECOMING A MATTER OF INCREASING CONCERN AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION. THE SUBJECT HAS THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THAI-U.S. RELATIONS. WE, THEREFORE, SUPPORT FULLY AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A BETTER DEFINITION OF U.S. INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AUTHORITATIVE, PERSUASIVE AND POLITICALLY PALATABLE STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC USE ON THIS MATTER. (REFTEL A). IN THE PRESENT MESSAGE WE HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT TO THAI-U.S. RELATIONS AND ALSO OFFER SOME THOUGHTS ON POLITICAL INITIATIVES THAT MIGHT PROMOTE OUR INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA.

2. PRESS REPORTS THE LAST FEW WEEKS, INCLUDING STATEMENTS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 07092 012307Z

BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REVEAL ACCUTE SENSITIVITY TOWARD AND AWAREMENESS OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL BUILDUP AND OUR EXPANSION OF THE DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL BASE. THE RTG'S CONCERN DERIVES PRIMARILY FROM ITS POSITION AS A LITTORAL STATE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. ADDITIONALLY, ELEMENTS OF THE RTG, PARTICULARLY THE SUPREME COMMAND, HAVE PERMITTED USE OF THE UTAPAO-SATTAHIP BASE COMPLEX FOR LIMITED SUPPORT OF OUR ACTIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THIS INCLUDES LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF DIEGO GARCIA AS WELL AS SOME PATROL SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS. WHEN THE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LEARNS OF THIS OR IT BECOMES PUBLIC, WE WILL HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

3. THE INDIAN OCEAN ISSUE BECAME PUBLICLY PROMINENT WHEN THE PRESS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED THAT B-52 AIRCRAFT FROM THAILAND MIGHT FLY RECONNAISSANCE OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN. IN REFUTING THESE STORIES, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS STATED THAT U.S. FORCES STATIONED IN THAILAND ARE CONCERNED WITH INDOCHINA ONLY (REFTEL B, C AND D). WE ARE CONCERNED LEST THIS ATTITUDE AFFECT OUR USE OF UTAPAO TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN DIEGO GARCIA. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF OUR SUPPORT FOR INDIAN OCEAN ACTIVITIES FROM THAILAND MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF OUR FORCES HERE AS A DETERRANT TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE HERE PROBABLY PRODUCE AN OFFICIAL RTG REQUEST THAT WE CEASE AND DESIST.

4. THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD AND WITH SOME SUCCESS IN GETTING ACROSS THEIR POINT OF VIEW ON THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND WERE ABLE TO HAVE PUBLISHED IN THAILAND IN ITS ENTIRETY A STATEMENT ON THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE THUS FAR SOMEWHAT INADEQUATE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE U.S. ON THE MATTER HAVE RECEIVED SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS IN THE THAI PRESS. FOR INSTANCE, THE NATION EDITORIALIZED ON APRIL 29 THAT "SOMEHOW SEYMOUR WEISS, DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF POLITICAL-MILITARY ACTIVITIES, HAS MANAGED TO TELL A GULLIBLE CONGRESS COMMITTEE THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS MORE SAY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN THAN THE LITTORAL COUNTRIES.....THE RIGHT TO SAIL IN HIGH SEAS IS A MATTER OF PREFERENCE EITHER OF BIG POWERS OR OF SMALL POWERS BUT TO PROMOTE NAVAL CONFRONTATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, IS DEFINITELY A MTTER FOR LITTORAL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BANGKO 07092 012307Z

COUNTRIES." SUCH STATEMENTS AS THIS WELL INDICATE THE NEED FOR THE TYPE OF AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT ON THE INDIAN OCEAN WHICH AMBASSADOR NOYNIHAN PERSUASIVELY REQUESTS.

5. TURNING NOW TO COMMENTS ON POLITICAL INITIATIVES THAT MIGHT PROMOTE OUR SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA, I ENDORSE THE GIST OF PARAGRAPH 13 OF AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S CABLE. THERE WOULD BE NO HARM IN ASSOCIATING OURSELVES WITH THE BRESHNEV-GANDHI JOINT DECLARATION. THIS WOULD BE SIMILAR TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S RESPONSE TO KHRUSHCHEV'S 1961 CALL FOR COMPLETE AND GENERAL DIS-ARMAMENT WITH A SIMILAR PRONOUNCEMENT, EVEN THOUGH NO ONE IN ANY RESPONSIBLE POSITION TRULY BELIEVED IN THE IMMINENCE OF THIS POSSIBILITY. WITH DEDICATION TO THE ESSENCE OF THE BRESHNEV-GANDHI DECLARATION WE COULD MOVE INTO A MANY-TIERED SET OF DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS WHILE CONTINUING TO DEVELOP DIEGO GARCIA. AFTER ALL, SOVIET NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HAVE NOT BEEN HAMPERED BY THE DE-

CLARATION.

6. I DO FIND THE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE DISCUSSIONS INTRIGUING AND PARTICULARLY THE SUGGESTION FOR INCLUDING PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THIS MIGHT KEEP THE UK ON OUR SIDE AS WELL AS GIVE THE PRC A BEAUTIFUL FORUM FOR BLASTING SOVIET HYPOCRISY. IT WOULD BE INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING TO DESIGN BASIC CRITERIA (PARAGRAPH 13.B) THAT COULD BE EMBARRASSING TO BOTH INDIA AND THE SOVIETS, I.E., A WEIGHTING FORMULA THAT PUTS NAVAL DAYS IN THE OCEAN, PORT VISITS, AND NAVAL BASES INTO A PLAUSIBLE RELATIONSHIP. DIEGO GARCIA MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE MADE TO APPEAR A SMALL LIGHTHOUSE IN A STORMY SEA.

7. OUR CHIEF RATIONALE FOR BEING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS HISTORICAL AND NOT ONLY FOR THE FACT THAT OUR NAVAL PRESENCE THERE EXTENDS BACK A NUMBER OF YEARS, AS ABLY SET FORTH IN THE SEYMOUR WEISS STATEMENT TO THE CONGRESS. IN THE PAST, BIDS FOR NAVAL ASCENDENCY HAVE LED TO CONFLICTS; E.G., THE UK-IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVAL RIVALRY LED TO WWI AND JAPANESE NAVAL EXPANSION TO PEARL HARBOR AND A WAR WHICH ENGULFED MOST STATES OF ASIA. HENCE, A

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PAGE 05 BANGKO 07092 012307Z

LIMITED U.S. INTEREST IN THE INDIAN OCEAN IS TO CREATE SOME KIND OF EQUILIBRIUM IN THAT REGION W
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